

Chapter 4

Chapter 4

Resilience

Closing the achievement gaps and helping all students to be successful creates large demands on educators. One of these demands is the need to develop a deep appreciation for the variety of cultures, languages, and economic circumstances from which their students come. Research and practical experience show that these students have abilities that have not been recognized or are yet to be fully developed. Yet they often show a resilience—an ability to bounce back from adversity—in their everyday lives that holds them in good stead.

What is resilience and why is it important?

Resilience is “a set of qualities and circumstances that foster success despite risk and adversity” (Benard, 2004). Students who are resilient have strengths and characteristics that help them succeed in school despite the difficulties they may face in their lives. Parents and educators can build on these strengths and help develop them in less resilient students. One way to do this is through the power of caring adults and schools that convey high expectations and provide opportunities for students to actively participate in the learning process.

What can your school do to build resilience in students?

When schools are places where the basic human needs for support, respect, and belonging are met, motivation for learning is enhanced. According to research, there are three things that are critical to healthy development and school success for students: caring relationships, high expectations, and opportunities for participation.

How do schools provide caring relationships for students?

Caring educators provide trust and the message of “being there” for a student. You can show respect for your students by acknowledging them for who they are, and making a one-on-one connection with them. Caring educators look underneath the negative behavior of a student and refuse to take this behavior personally. By listening and getting to know your students, you tell them that they are important and they matter to you. Students excel when they believe that you will help them succeed, show interest in their lives outside of school, and care about what they think about their classes (Ferguson, 2004). The resilience research has shown that the presence of just one caring adult in the life of a child can make the difference between success and failure in school (Gay, 2000).



Enduring Understanding: Effective teachers of culturally and linguistically diverse students understand that they must find ways to support their students to build both academic as well as personal resilience.

Optimal Instruction for culturally and linguistically diverse students:

- promotes problem-solving, social competence, identity development and a sense of control, purpose and future
- holds high expectations of students
- develops and maintains caring relationships with students
- utilizes methods that increase student interaction and participation

Why are high expectations important?

Teachers who have high expectations for all of their students help them learn to believe in themselves and in their futures while developing self-esteem, independence, and optimism. By providing consistency in discipline policies, teaching methods, and curriculum, your students know where they stand both behaviorally and academically. Time and again, research has shown that students can and will rise (or sink) to the expectations that educators hold for them, whether we are talking about teaching algebra to inner city elementary students or reducing violence in troubled high schools. We are learning that even students who are struggling to complete homework or understand assignments want you to both demand high quality work from them and encourage them to do well (Ferguson, 2004).

How can you provide students with opportunities for participation?

Practices such as making learning more hands-on, involving students in curriculum planning, cooperative learning, peer helping, mentoring, and community service can provide opportunities for participation that will actively involve students in their own learning. You can involve students more actively in learning by providing curriculum that is challenging and inclusive of different perspectives to build on your students' strengths, interests, and experiences. Encouraging questioning—even by low achievers, asking students to help each other, and thinking ahead about how well students will enjoy your lessons all create opportunities for student participation (Ferguson, 2004).

CREDE Standard for Resilience

- **Instructional Conversation**—Teaching through conversation.

What can you do to help build resilience in your students?

Research has identified five key characteristics of resilience that you can use to help students be successful:

1. Social competence: you can help your students build relationship skills like communication skills, a sense of humor, and caring to give them the ability to work successfully in school, as well as the community.
2. Problem-solving skills: you can help your students develop the ability to effectively plan their work, think critically, and know when to seek help from others.
3. Critical consciousness: you can help your students build positive strategies for overcoming challenges such as abuse, neglect, discrimination or oppression.
4. Autonomy: you can help your students develop a sense of their own identity as someone who can act independently and exert control over their environment. Autonomy is not valued equally in all cultures, however. Therefore, when promoting autonomy in the classroom, it is important to be sensitive to its varying value for different students.
5. A sense of purpose and future: you can help your students learn how to set goals that will motivate them to succeed academically and personally, expose them to culturally-appropriate successful role models, and emphasize the value of persistence, optimism, and hopefulness.

Schools That Close the Achievement Gaps


In Bonnie Benard's chapter "Turnaround Teachers and Schools" (Benard, 2003), there

are several common strategies used by schools that are able to build resilience in students and close the achievement gaps. These strategies describe schools that have a vision and mission that are based on high expectations, caring relationships, and opportunities for participation:

- There is support for teachers including time, resources, professional development opportunities, and the same factors that are important for students – caring, high expectations, and opportunities for participation.
- There is consistency across the school in discipline, teaching strategies, and curriculum content.
- The school has a shared mission based on meeting the needs of the whole student.
- The school is organized in small learning communities.
- School-based mentoring is provided.

- The school provides students with career exploration and high school transition programs.
- Early intervention services are available.
- Diversity is seen as a strength and is celebrated.
- After-school programs promote school-community partnerships and support students.
- There is ongoing assessment of how students feel the school is doing in meeting their needs.
- Family-school-community partnerships are valued and recognized as important to the success of students.
- Students are out in the community doing service-learning.

Benard and Burgoa provide the following list that details the kinds of strengths that educators should work to develop in their students in order to foster resilience.

 Personal Resilience Strengths	
SOCIAL COMPETENCE (Relationship Skills) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Responsiveness <input type="checkbox"/> Flexibility <input type="checkbox"/> Cross-cultural competence <input type="checkbox"/> Empathy/caring <input type="checkbox"/> Communication skills (both verbal and written) <input type="checkbox"/> Sense of humor PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Planning <input type="checkbox"/> Sees alternatives <input type="checkbox"/> Critical thinking <input type="checkbox"/> Insight <input type="checkbox"/> Resourcefulness 	AUTONOMY (Sense of Self/Identity) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Accomplishment <input type="checkbox"/> Self-awareness <input type="checkbox"/> Detachment <input type="checkbox"/> Resistance (refusal to accept negative messages about one's self, family, gender, culture) SENSE OF PURPOSE AND FUTURE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Special interest/hobby <input type="checkbox"/> Goal directedness <input type="checkbox"/> Achievement motivation <input type="checkbox"/> Educational aspiration <input type="checkbox"/> Persistence <input type="checkbox"/> Optimism <input type="checkbox"/> Compelling future <input type="checkbox"/> Faith (spiritual connectedness) <input type="checkbox"/> Sense of meaning

Bonnie Benard and Carol Burgoa, WestEd, Oakland, CA, 2002

Resilience References

Bonnie Benard, "Turnaround Teachers and Schools" in Belinda Williams, Ed., *Closing the Achievement Gap: A Vision for Changing Beliefs and Practices, 2nd Edition* (Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2003).

Ronald Ferguson. *Necessary Policies and Practices to Close the Student Achievement Gaps*, Presentation to NEA Symposium on Critical Issues for Educators (Washington, D.C., 2004).

Geneva Gay, *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2000).



I CAN DO IT!

Classroom Management Training

"I Can Do It!" is professional development created by teachers and delivered by teachers, and is designed to be used with new K-12 teachers within their first five years of teaching. The topic, classroom management, is relevant to teachers and education support personnel, and is delivered by cadre members who are experienced trainers and successful educators. Included in the curriculum is information about the elements necessary for successful classroom management, communication or learning styles, interventions for difficult behaviors, hints to create the smoothly flowing classroom, tools to begin building positive parent / teacher relationships and an opportunity to link with a partner for future support. The training is designed to impart as much information as possible while maintaining an interactive approach. To access the training, contact Nikki Barnes (nbarnes@nea.org) or Lisa Long (llong@nea.org) in NEA's Teacher Quality Department.



Educator Check-In on Resilience (How Am I Doing?)

Directions: Review the list below. Place a check by those items you practice on a consistent basis. Feel free to discuss these items with your colleagues to expand your practice.

1. ___ I work with small groups of students on a regular basis.
2. ___ I facilitate small group conversations or dialogue that have instructional goals.
3. ___ I vary ways of grouping students to promote interaction and participation.
4. ___ I organize instruction that assists in the development of academic language.
5. ___ I build positive, caring relationships with my students by acting as a role-model, nurturer, mentor or friend.
6. ___ I develop instructional activities that value students' experiences and abilities.
7. ___ Most of my instructional activities support my students to develop problem-solving skills.
8. ___ I provide opportunities for students to become independent learners by planning lessons that incorporate student choice.
9. ___ I help students communicate a sense of future by having them (a) understand the purpose/rationale for the lessons, and (b) set goals for their own learning.
10. ___ I model caring and support in my relationships with students and their parents.
11. ___ I structure the class norms and activities to build trusting and caring relationships between students.
12. ___ I implement instructional activities that promote success for all students.
13. ___ I hold high expectations for my students in the following areas: (a) quality and quantity of work, (b) work habits and work procedures, (c) classroom norms, (d) interpersonal behavior.

Priorities for my own professional development

Based on the educator check-in, identify three priorities for your own professional development.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Resilience: Approaches, Strategies, and Activities At-a-Glance

Approaches	Strategies	Activity Number
Building Resilience	Foster resilience	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tools for Teaching Resilience: How Do Trees Get So Tall?, page 4-7 2. Stress Buffer Shield, page 4-9 3. "Cutting Out" Stress, page 4-11 4. Be Gentle with Yourself and Others, page 4-13 5. Believe It...or Not!, page 4-16
	Develop strengths-based practices	6. Educator Reflection—Deficits into Strengths, page 4-18
Instructional Conversation	Engage students in dialogue about their learning	7. Educator Reflection—Teaching Through Conversation, page 4-22
	Develop resilience	8. Educator Reflection—Resilience-Based Pointers for Communicating with Youth, Staff, and Parents, page 4-25

Ready-to-Use Approaches, Strategies, and Activities



Activity #1

Tools for Teaching Resilience: How Do Trees Get So Tall?

NEA's Health Information Network has developed a variety of tools and resources for fostering resilience in students and adults. This activity helps students understand how to "bend with the breezes" in times of stress.

Lesson Preparation

Grades: 3-5
Grouping: Whole class or small groups
Materials: Word puzzle (page 4-8)
Objective: To help students understand the aspect of "bending not breaking" in resilience and recognize that stress "symptoms" can be normal reactions to an abnormal situation

Lesson Delivery

1. An old adage states that "tall trees bend with the breeze." Children who face taxing situations with a resilient attitude are much more likely to deal with those challenges effectively, much like tall trees during a storm.
2. When working with students, discuss how trees and other plants react to storms and strong winds.
3. Ask what they have witnessed during and after storms. Compare and contrast the plant discussion to what people can do to remain undamaged during stressful times.
4. Ask students to share their ideas about what it means to "bend without breaking." Ask them to come up with examples.

5. Have students complete the worksheet "How Do Trees Get So Tall?" Tell them to think about the discussion you had on dealing with stress as they unscramble the words.

Ruth Brannigan, illustrations by Mary Garner-Mitchell, *Tools for Teaching Resilience: Strategies for Life's Ups and Downs Activity Book: Grades K through 5*, NEA Health Information Network, (Washington, DC: 2002), pp 5-6.

"How Do Trees Get So Tall?"

Answer Key:

Trust
Safety
Feelings
Heart Friends
Help
Health Love
Happiness
Self Talking
Goals
Dreams Peace

They Bend During Bad Storms



NEA's Health Information Network offers several tools and resources on resilience, including a "Stress Self-Assessment" for educators to take. So take care of yourself, and go to <http://neahin.org/programs/mentalhealth/index.htm> to download a free copy and the scoring guidelines. You'll also find posters and other materials for your classroom.

RIDDLE: How do trees get so tall?

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Unscramble each of the clue words.

Copy the letters in the numbered "leaves" to the blocks below with the same number.

□ □ □ □ **B** □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ **B** □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

A+ Activity #2 Stress Buffer Shield

Another way to foster resilience is to help students recognize and develop strategies for dealing with stress. Activity 2 provides an example of one way to do this.

Lesson Preparation

Grades: 6-12
 Grouping: Whole class or small groups
 Duration: 30-40 minutes
 Materials: Blank shield handout (page 4-10)
 Objective: To understand how coping skills help transform stress into a positive force and protect them from being overwhelmed by pressure

Lesson Delivery

Stress buffers: personal store of constructive coping skills

1. Distribute the "My Stress Shield" handout to each student.
2. Share examples with them of your own buffers.
3. Ask students to think about the qualities that make up their own personal stress buffers. You may want to discuss how students define stress.
4. Direct students to record their stress buffers in the appropriate sections of the shield.
5. Give them 10-15 minutes to complete this.
6. Ask students to form groups of three.
7. Have them share their shields with one another—they may hear things that they want to add to their own shields.

8. Give them 15 minutes to share.

9. Have students return to their seats.

10. Ask students to share any observations, insights, particularly good ideas they picked up.

11. Emphasize the importance of using these buffers to help them handle stress.

My Stress Shield

Life experiences that have strengthened me: Moving around a lot with my family Losing a family member	My support network of people who encourage and help me: My best friend My mother My boss
Attitudes/Beliefs that help protect me: People are basically good My religious views I think I can succeed	Physical self-care habits that prepare me or help me release tension: Reading Bike riding Working out
Action skills I can use to change the situation: I'm organized Not putting things off	



My Stress Shield

The diagram is a large oval with a thick, dark grey border. Inside the oval, there is a lighter grey area. This area is divided into five sections by dark blue lines. A vertical line runs from the top to the bottom, and a horizontal line runs from the left to the right, intersecting at the center. This creates four quadrants. The top-left quadrant contains the text 'Life experiences that have strengthened me:'. The top-right quadrant contains the text 'My support network of people who encourage and help me:'. The bottom-left quadrant contains the text 'Attitudes/Beliefs that help protect me:'. The bottom-right quadrant contains the text 'Physical self-care habits that prepare me or help me release tension:'. The bottom section of the oval, below the horizontal line, contains the text 'Action skills I can use to change the situation:'. The entire oval is surrounded by a ring of small, light grey circles.

Life experiences that have strengthened me:

My support network of people who encourage and help me:

Attitudes/Beliefs that help protect me:

Physical self-care habits that prepare me or help me release tension:

Action skills I can use to change the situation:

A+ Activity #3 "Cutting Out" Stress

Elementary grade students and linguistically diverse students also need to develop strategies for coping with stress. Use this puzzle to begin a conversation with your students, particularly when they are feeling stressed over standardized testing. Feel free to create your own puzzle, modify the language, or make other changes to meet the needs of your students.

Lesson Preparation

- Grades: 3-5
 Grouping: Whole class
 Materials: Scissors, puzzle to cut out (page 4-12)
 Objective: To help children create a plan of action for times when there's more to "process" than their "processor" can handle

Lesson Delivery

1. Have students cut out the blocks in the puzzle and match them to create a picture.
2. Examine the picture clues and talk about the activities listed. Have the students share which activities help them when they are feeling stressed.
3. Brainstorm a list of other activities that could help children feel relieved from stress. Imagine various everyday stressful situations and how some of these stress-relieving activities could help them to feel reassured and comforted. Ask, "What do you do to 'take your mind off things?'"

Debriefing

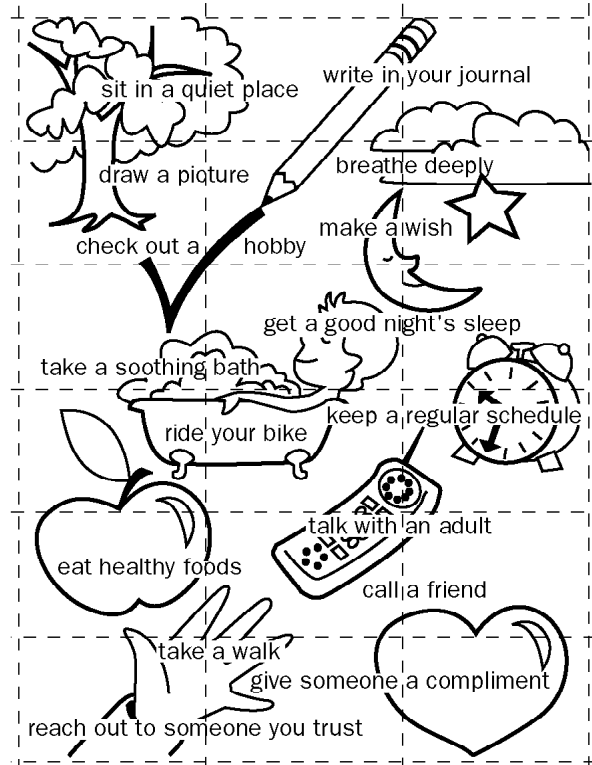
- What worked well in this activity?

- What was challenging for you?
- How could we do better next time with this activity?

Ruth Brannigan, illustrations by Mary Garner-Mitchell, *Tools for Teaching Resilience: Strategies for Life's Ups and Downs Activity Book: Grades K through 5*, NEA Health Information Network, (Washington, DC: 2002), 7-8.

SOLUTION

Activities help "CUT OUT" stress and make us feel better

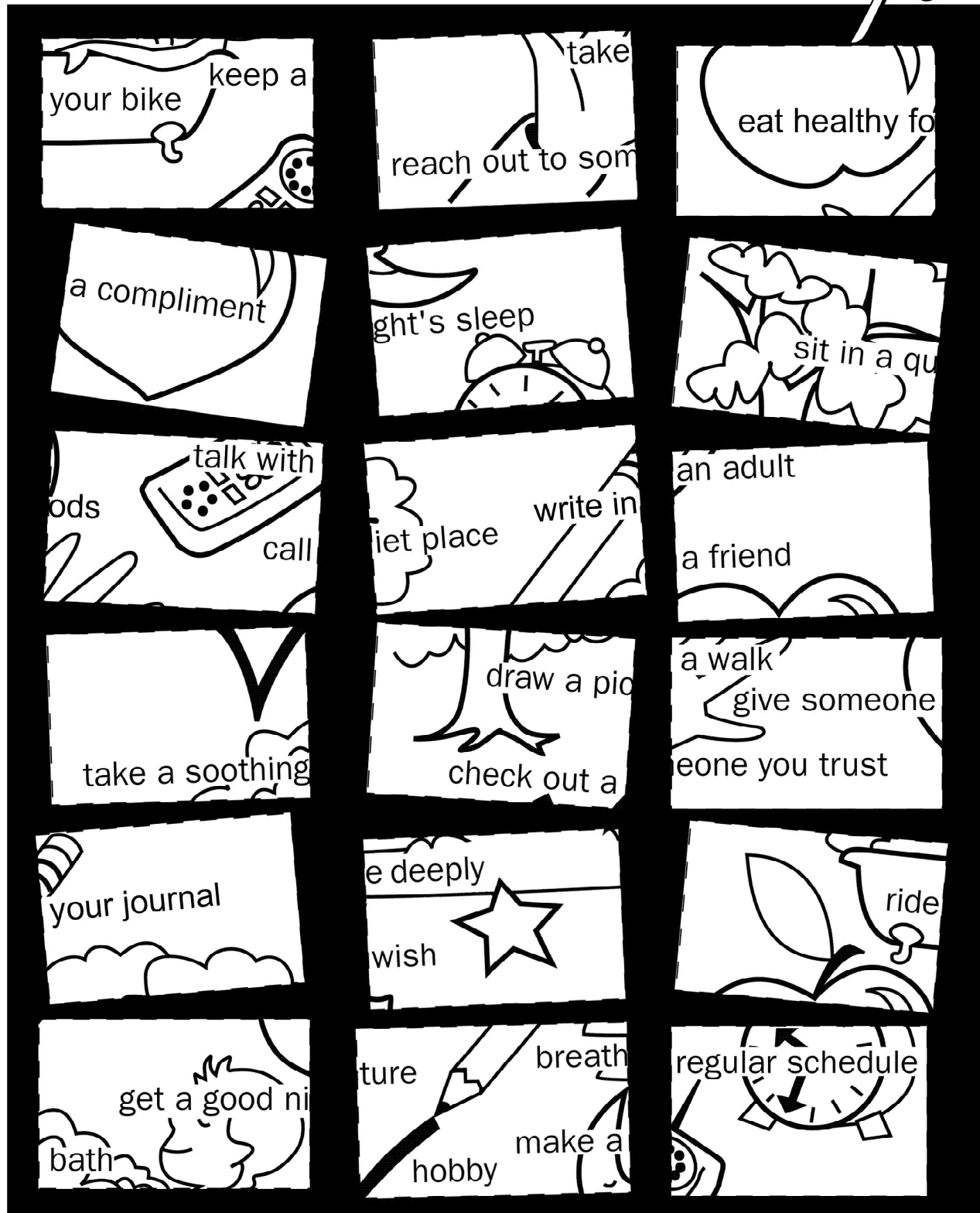


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Activities help "CUT OUT" stress and make us feel better

Cut out the blocks below. Match them and the puzzle's picture clues.





Activity #4 Be Gentle With Yourself and Others

Even the youngest students are confronted with stressful or disadvantaged situations on a far-too-frequent basis. Here's an easy way to lead those students into a discussion of dealing with stressful times.

Lesson Preparation

Grades: K-2
Grouping: Whole class
Materials: "Be gentle with yourself" story (page 4-14) and dot-to-dot picture, (page 4-15), crayons
Objective: To help students understand how we can know when to be gentle with ourselves and others, and how to develop that skill, in order to deal with stress, trauma or loss

Lesson delivery

1. Many people attempt to deal with stress, trauma or loss by trying to

avoid it. For example, some people escape into their work. Unfortunately, people can make things more difficult when they push themselves to keep going when what they really need to do is relax. The Saint Bernard is beloved for its dedication to completing difficult tasks during threatening situations, as well as for its loving personality.

2. Share the story with the students. Use the story of Barry, a famous Saint Bernard, to start a discussion about how we can know when to be gentle with ourselves and others, and how to develop that skill.
3. Let the students complete the dot-to-dot picture.

Ruth Brannigan, illustrations by Mary Garner-Mitchell, *Tools for Teaching Resilience: Strategies for Life's Ups and Downs Activity Book: Grades K through 5*, (Washington, DC: NEA Health Information Network, 2002), 17-18.

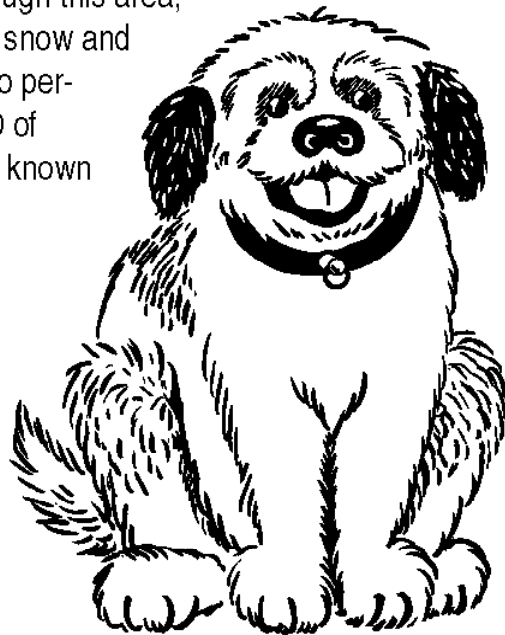
Be gentle with yourself and others



Dogs: “Man’s Best Friend.” When we come home, dogs are always glad to see us. They love us no matter what. There are many breeds of dogs. The breed that’s perhaps best known for its gentle, loving personality and keen sense of bravery is the Saint Bernard.

Barry, one of the most famous Saint Bernards ever, lived more than 200 years ago in the mountains between Italy and Switzerland. Known for narrow, dangerous roads and trails, this region frequently gets fierce snowstorms. So, it’s no surprise that, during his long life, Barry rescued many people who, while traveling through this area, got lost or found themselves trapped because of the snow and rugged terrain. Barry isn’t the only Saint Bernard who performed such wonderful, heroic acts. More than 2,000 of these dogs worked in this part of the Alps that’s now known as “Saint Bernard Pass.”

Saint Bernards are known not only for doing brave rescue work but also for being fun friends and loving companions. With their big, broad chests, they are good at clearing pathways and they are strong enough to pull people out of deep snow. Dogs like Barry also have an excellent sense of direction. They can navigate through thick fog and heavy, blinding snowstorms better than most people can. Besides being great rescue dogs, Saint Bernards are also a lot of fun. They enjoy running after thrown sticks, chasing balls, and cuddling with kids.



The point is, Saint Bernards are powerful and skilled yet they are also gentle with themselves and others. When in difficult or scary situations, people rely on Saint Bernards not only for being strong and skilled but also because of their sensitive and gentle manners. And, as “man’s best friend,” dogs like Saint Bernards count on people to be the same in return.

Be gentle with yourself and others

Dogs like Barry, a big, brave Saint Bernard, have an excellent sense of direction and can trek through the toughest conditions. On the fun side, they also run after thrown sticks, chase balls, and cuddle with kids.



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Activity #5 **Believe It...Or Not!**

Part of building critical consciousness among culturally and economically diverse students is helping them understand how to deal with the barrage of information they confront through newspapers, television, radio, and the Internet.

Lesson Preparation

Grades: 3-12
Grouping: Whole class
Materials: Believe It...Or Not! (page 4-17)
Objective: To help students to be "critical consumers" of information, and decide whether they should believe every headline they read or every story they hear on television or radio

Lesson Delivery

Grades: 3-5

1. Discussion for this activity is directed toward student's own responsibilities where media is concerned.
2. Ask "Is it wise to watch the news over and over when negative news is presented?"

3. How should students decide how to screen what they watch, read, and listen to, especially during stressful times?
4. As a related activity, students could make up their own "believable" and "unbelievable" headlines.

Grades: 6-12

Use actual headlines from the local newspaper to guide your discussion of questions 1-4 above.

Ruth Brannigan, illustrations by Mary Garner-Mitchell, *Tools for Teaching Resilience: Strategies for Life's Ups and Downs Activity Book: Grades K through 5*, (Washington, DC: NEA Health Information Network, 2002), 17-18.

Believe It... Or Not!

You are in charge of how you react to headlines. Read the ones on this page and ask yourself: Is it fact or is it fiction?

Inside:

- Knowledge is power
- Spelling bee takes flight

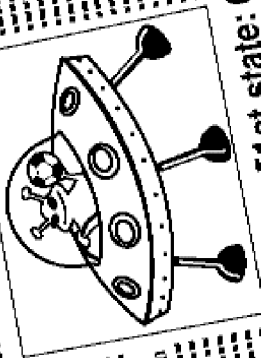
NEWS

Weather forecast:
Partly cloudy.
Some rain in
the afternoon.



Learning math adds to your intelligence

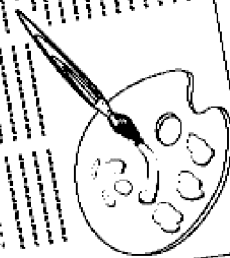
Aliens land on soccer field



Dog wins election

President announces 51st state: Confusion

Art expresses feelings



School - a safe place to be

Teachers keep students protected

Cafeteria serves pinkie-dink potatoes

There's news you can use, but choose wisely. Circle the headlines you think are believable.

Believe It... Or Not!

You are in charge of how you react to headlines. Read the ones on this page and ask yourself: Is it fact or is it fiction?

Inside:

- Teachers' high expectations equal faith in students' abilities
- Moonbeams give you sunburn

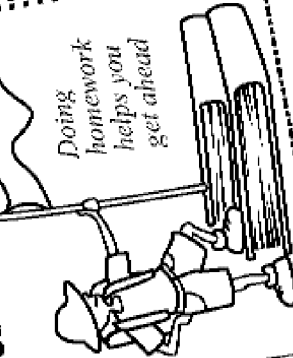
NEWS

Weather forecast:
Sunny with
the five low,
day!



Bus wheels: still going round and round

Reading offers great adventures



Doing homework helps you get ahead

PE: helps students stay physically fit

Magnets win beauty contest: found attractive



Traveling elephants pack their own trunks

New shampoo cures the common cold



There's news you can use, but choose wisely. Circle the headlines you think are believable.



Activity #6

Educator Reflection—Deficits into Strengths

Too often, we tend to see only the negative traits—the “deficits”—of certain students, rather than focusing on the skills that they bring to the classroom. Behavioral problems, academic struggles, language difficulties—these can all become barriers to learning if we only focus on what is not working. To help turn those perceived deficits into strengths that support students, let’s consider a new view of students.

Reflection Process:

1. Review the list of “deficits” in “Our Words Matter!” (page 4-19) Can you change your perspective and find a way to describe each of these deficits as a strength?
2. When you finish, compare your answers to a colleague’s; you may find another way of looking at a challenging student. Talk about your responses. You can also refer to the “answer key” at the end of this activity, for more ideas (page 4-20).
3. Look at your list again. Do any of these words describe a student in your class? A student you see in the cafeteria? A student out on the playground? One who rides your school bus? Think about the strengths this student brings to school. What could you do to turn the deficits into strengths for this student? What could you change in your classroom, cafeteria, in the playground or bus environment that might make a change in this student?
4. Look at the “Self-Reflection Resilience Checklist.” (page 4-21) This self-assessment lists practices that have been shown to build resilience in students. Which ones do you do on a regular basis? Which ones do you need to add or do more often? Complete the checklist for yourself and use it to think about improving your practice and guiding you in choosing staff development opportunities.



What Is My School Doing To Foster Social and Emotional Learning?

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) provides a number of online and print resources that support the development of resilience. CASEL’s mission is to enhance children’s success in school and life by promoting coordinated, evidence-based social, emotional, and academic learning as an essential part of education from pre-school through high school.

Go to www.casel.org/downloads/selfassessmentguide.pdf to access a brief guide that is intended to help educators evaluate how their school is doing in fostering social and emotional learning.



Our Words Matter!

DEFICITS

STRENGTHS

Short attention span

Irresponsible

Distractible

Hyperactive

Unpredictable

Impulsive

Loud

Stubborn

Poor planner

Disorganized

Willful

Bossy

Argumentative

Tests limits

Manipulative

Anxious

Impatient

Explosive

Disobedient

Rebellious

Defiant

Angry



Our Words Matter!

DEFICITS

STRENGTHS

Short attention span

Irresponsible

Distractible

Hyperactive

Unpredictable

Impulsive

Loud

Stubborn

Poor planner

Disorganized

Willful

Bossy

Argumentative

Tests limits

Manipulative

Anxious

Impatient

Explosive

Disobedient

Rebellious

Defiant

Angry

Many interests

Carefree

Perceptive

Energetic

Flexible

Spontaneous

Enthusiastic

Persistent

Present-oriented

Unstructured

Determined

Takes leadership

Committed

Risk-taker

Negotiator

Cautious

Eager

Dramatic

Self-directed

Non-conformist

Bold

Activist



Self-Reflection Resilience Checklist

Place a ✓ by the items that demonstrate your strengths-based practices.
Place a + by items you would like to improve or strengthen.

I demonstrate **CARING AND SUPPORT** for my students by:

- _____ Creating and sustaining a caring sense of community
- _____ Creating one-to-one connections
- _____ Actively listening/Using eye contact
- _____ Paying attention and showing interest
- _____ Praising and encouraging
- _____ Getting to know hopes, interests, and dreams
- _____ Showing respect
- _____ Being nonjudgmental
- _____ Looking beneath "problem" behavior
- _____ Using humor/smiling/laughing
- _____ Creating small, personalized groups
- _____ Creating opportunities for peer-helping and cross-age mentoring

I communicate **HIGH EXPECTATIONS** to my students by:

- _____ Believing in the innate resilience of every child
- _____ Seeing culture as an asset
- _____ Challenging and supporting ("You can do it; I'll be there to help.")
- _____ Connecting learning to students' interests, strengths, experiences, dreams, and goals
- _____ Encouraging creativity and imagination
- _____ Seeing student behavior as driven by basic needs (love, belonging, etc.)
- _____ Setting clear expectations/boundaries/structure
- _____ Using rituals and traditions
- _____ Using a variety of instructional strategies to tap multiple intelligences
- _____ Conveying to students they have power to change and determine their own behavior and thoughts

I provide opportunities for my students' **PARTICIPATION** and **CONTRIBUTION** by:

- _____ Providing opportunities for students to plan, make decisions, and problem-solve
- _____ Empowering youth to help create after-school program rules
- _____ Creating opportunities for creative expression:
 - _____ Art
 - _____ Music
 - _____ Writing/Poetry
 - _____ Storytelling/Drama
- _____ Inviting the active participation of often excluded groups:
 - _____ Girls/Women
 - _____ Youth of color
 - _____ Youth with special needs
- _____ Infusing service learning
- _____ Offering peer-helping, cross-age helping, and peer support groups
- _____ Using cooperative learning
- _____ Providing ongoing opportunities for personal reflection
- _____ Providing ongoing opportunities for dialog/discussion
- _____ Providing ongoing opportunities for experiential/active learning



Activity #7

Educator Reflection—Teaching Through Conversation

Instructional conversation (IC) is teaching through conversation to guide students to construct more complex understandings of a topic, text, problem, or other activity. The following information provides an introduction to this instructional strategy that is very effective in developing the abilities of diverse students.

Reflection Process:

1. Read “Getting Started with Instructional Conversation”
2. Reflect: does the “teacher talk” resemble your own way of speaking to students?
3. Think about how you can improve your own Instructional Conversation with your students.
4. Look at the chart “Suggested Teacher Talk.” (page 4-24) Practice an instructional conversation with a colleague around a current curricular objective that you are working on in your classroom.

Getting Started with Instructional Conversation

Instructional conversation (IC) takes advantage of conversation’s appeal for students when topics are interesting, and participation is comfortable and inclusive. Ordinarily, IC takes place in small groups, though a teacher may have Instructional Conversations with larger groups or individuals. For example, teachers may work on a unit or thematic topic with the whole class, followed by small group ICs that focus on researching and analyzing selected aspects of the topic. In engaging diverse students through dialogue, the teacher:

1. arranges the classroom to accommodate conversation between the teacher and a small group of students on a regular and frequent schedule;
2. has a clear academic goal that guides conversation with students;
3. ensures that student talk occurs at higher rates than teacher talk;
4. guides conversation to include students’ views, judgments, and rationales, using text evidence and other substantive support;
5. ensures that all students are included in the conversation according to their preferences;
6. listens carefully to assess levels of students’ understanding;
7. assists students’ learning throughout the conversation by questioning, restating, praising, encouraging, and so forth; and
8. guides the students to prepare a product that indicates the Instructional Conversation’s goal was achieved.

A teacher begins IC by simply asking students to talk about a selected activity, text, or experience from their point of view, that is, based on their knowledge from home, community, or school. The teacher encourages every student to talk specifically about personal and school experiences that relate to the text and to the concepts the teacher plans to develop. Students are encouraged to participate in the IC using language forms and styles that are comfortable for them. Those forms and styles vary enormously; after all, many cultures have very different styles for how people talk with each other, and for how children talk with adults. By accepting students’ preferred participation formats, teachers can elicit more student speech. That gives teachers more opportunities to promote precise and complex student language expression. Precise and complex thought is developed simultaneously.

Learning Academic Language Instructional Conversation Example

Haitian students learn to listen selectively in a seventh-grade beginning English language study class. In a “Welcome to School” unit emphasizing school vocabulary, reading a school map, and listening to school announcements, the teacher converses with students about a learning strategy called Listen Selectively, to help students plan their own learning. Using students’ home language, she asks them how they learn and how they can learn better. They discuss action steps for achieving their learning goals. The teacher guides students to connect their action steps with what it means to listen selectively. They use a chart with important features of selective listening, such as attending to key words and phrases, to words or themes that repeat, or to words that give clues, such as first, finally, for example, and so forth. Students listen to the teacher read the school announcements to fill out the chart for the information they need. After discussing the chart, they follow it for the rest of the school day. (Ann S. Rosebery, B. Warren and F. Conant, “Appropriating Scientific Discourse: Findings from Language Minority Classrooms,” *The Journal of Learning Sciences*, (2,1 (1992) : 61-94.

Selecting an Instructional Goal

Instructional conversation requires a clear instructional goal and a plan for assistance and assessment that guides students to the goal. If students have little common knowledge on a selected topic, a teacher will provide appropriate direct or indirect experience in the form of hands-on activities, field trips, or complex real-world problems, or through resource books, media, or other sources. Such an experience provides all participants with a shared notion of the intended IC topic, the basis for initiating IC conversation. While any good conversation requires some latitude and drift in the topic, the teacher’s leadership is used to continue to focus on the topic goal. While the goal remains firm, the route to the goal is

responsive to students’ participation and developing understanding.

Here are some of the varied ways in which students can participate in instructional conversation:

Student Participation Formats in Instructional Conversation

- Students bid to answer.
- Students co-narrate.
- Students respond chorally.
- Students take turns.
- Students speak simultaneously.
- Students use overlapping speech.
- Students are called non-routinely.
- Students self-select.

Stephanie Stoll Dalton, *Pedagogy Matters: Standards for Effective Teaching Practice* (Santa Cruz, CA: Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence, 1998), 26-33.

Instructional Conversation's Balanced Participation

TEACHER TALK

- occurs less than total student talk
- sets up opportunities for students' talk
- has a topic focus
- is responsive to students' talk and language proficiency, scaffolding the discussion when needed
- models proper forms (syntax and grammar) of the language of instruction
- elicits students' language on the topic through probes about reasoning and feelings

STUDENT TALK

- occurs more than teacher talk
- is every students' product
- addresses the topic
- uses own preferred style of talking such as co-narration, simultaneous, choral, or overlapping speech
- uses proper forms of the language of instruction in response to models
- uses content lexicon and concepts in response to models, probes, and the flow of conversation

Suggested Teacher Talk for an Instructional Conversation

Paraphrasing: summarizing, restating, communicating your understanding

- So...
- In other words...
- What I hear you saying...
- As I listen to you, I'm hearing...

Clarifying: need more information, checking assumptions

- Tell me a little more about...
- Let me see if I understand...
- So, what you are saying is...?
- Can you give me an example of...?
- I'd be interested in knowing more about...
- Tell me what you mean by...
- To what extent...?

Reflective: analyze, reflect on cause and effect, metacognition, promote sense of self-efficacy

- When _____ happened, what thoughts went through your mind?
- What do you think led up to...?
- How do you know?
- What would you like to have happened differently?

Mediational: forecast what might happen, imagine possibilities, analyze, compare and contrast

- What would happen if...?
- What would it look like if you were to....?
- What's another way you might...?
- What might you see happening if...?

*Adapted from CREDE *Teaching Alive! Foundations of Coaching*. (Santa Cruz, CA: Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence, 1998).



Activity #8

Educator Reflection—Resilience-Based Pointers for Communicating with Youth, Staff, and Parents

Educators can use instructional conversations to support students in building resilience skills. Talking to students about common stressors, like adapting to a new environment, preparing for a test, or talking with teachers or peers, can help to build trust. How we talk to students, and each other, can help to shift a student from risk to resilience. What follows are ideas for how to shape your conversations to build resilience.



Resilience-based Pointers for Communicating with Youth, Staff, and Parents

STEP 1	I CARE...	Let the person know that he/she is important to you and to the group. However this is done, it must be credible and sincere.
STEP 2	I SEE...	<p>Focus on observable behavior. What did you see or hear that caused you to be concerned?</p> <p>SAY: You missed class for 3 days...</p> <p>DON'T SAY: You are not living up to your commitment.</p> <p>SAY: You don't manage to get your homework done anymore...</p> <p>DON'T SAY: You are really lazy and waste too much time. You are only giving 10 percent.</p>
STEP 3	I FEEL...	Let the person know how you feel about his/her behavior. Feelings are best expressed by a single word. "I feel angry." "I feel worried." This makes it clear to the person that what she/he is doing is affecting someone else. This reduces the chance of raising defenses and helps to avoid an argument.
STEP 4	LISTEN	<p>Listen to the person. Show this with facial expressions and other body language. Ask questions. Resist distractions.</p> <p>Caution: Be prepared for silence. Since you probably chose the time and place for addressing the issue, the person may or may not be prepared to talk at the time. They may be ready to talk at another time if you don't alienate them now.</p>
STEP 5	I WANT...	When you have heard the person's perspective let him/her know what you would like to happen. This is an opportunity to reinforce rules and expectations and make clear how you want the behavior to change.
STEP 6	I WILL...	Let him/her know how you will provide support. What are you willing to do? Your willingness to provide support will help create a bond and make change possible. Relationships and interpersonal process are the keys to changing behavior, not facts, warnings, or hysteria.

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